

## A Study of the Counselling Needs of Nigerian Youths in the Current Political Dispensation

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### Abstract

*The study investigated the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation. The population for the study was made up of all youths in Nigeria between 18-35 years old. A descriptive survey was adopted for the study. The sample for the study comprised 500 (five hundred) youths who were randomly selected from three senatorial districts of Lagos State. A research question and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A self-designed questionnaire Counselling Needs of Nigerian Youths Questionnaire (CNNYQ) was used to obtain data from the participants. The t-test was used to analyze the two hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. The two hypotheses were accepted. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that government at all levels in Nigeria should employ the services of counsellors in formulating policies for her youths.*

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**Keywords:** counselling needs, nigerian youths, current, political dispensation.

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### INTRODUCTION

The importance of youths in the national development of any nation can not be overemphasized. Nigerian youths have a major role to play in the current political dispensation as well as in the overall development of the country. The term 'youth' has been defined by several scholars. According to Rethinking Youth (2009), 'youth' is seen as a relational concept. This refers to the social construct, institutionalized and controlled in historically and culturally specific ways.

Onuekwusi & Effiong (2009) submit that globally youth is described as the period in an individual's life between the end of childhood and entry into the world of work. This period of development is seen as being universal in nature. Carrino (2005) described the period of youth as the transition from childhood to adulthood comprising 30% of the population in the developing world.

In the Nigerian context, 'youth' is defined by Nigerian Youth Development Policy- NYDP (2001) as all young persons of 18-35 years old who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Youths in Nigeria have been said to possess characteristics such as physical strength, great knowledge acquisition, propensity, love for adventure, less conservatism and preferences for boldness (Adedoyin, 2003, Torimiro, 2008).

In highlighting the importance of the Nigerian youths, Olujide, (2008) perceived youths as vital sources of manpower for development. Soyinka

(2006) described youths as catalyst in the process of political changes of any nation. The former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo (2008) described the Nigerian youths as the foundation of the society and submitted further that it is the youths' energy, inventiveness, character and orientation that define the pace of development and the security of a nation. Tenibiaje & Adegoroye (2009) are of the view that in spite of efforts by successive regimes to improve the lot of Nigerian youths; the condition of Nigerian youths still leaves much to be desired. According to the Nigerian Youths Development Policy (2001), problems Nigerian youths face include lack of appropriate role models, indiscipline, breakdown of family values, cult activities and moral decadence.

Nigerian youths are also a vulnerable group with peculiar needs and aspiration. They are sexually active. According to NYDP (2001), 43%-53% of the youths, who are sexually active lack adequate information and services to promote and protect their reproductive health, have a rapid rate of increase of Sexually Transmitted Diseases including HIV/AIDS. They lack adequate information and services to promote and protect their health.

Nigerian youths also face the challenge of unemployment. According to a World Bank Report of June 2009, over 40 million youths are unemployed. The International Labour Organization described the unemployment situation among Nigerian youths as a "serious job crisis" while the National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria cited in Baje (2010) submit that Nigeria is on the verge of

unemployment bomb ready to explode any moment from now. Given the lack of employment opportunities and consequent uncertain future, young Nigerians are forced to engage in unorthodox forms of livelihood such as crime and prostitution for women (Kakwagh & Ikwuba, 2010).

In recent times, youth crime have been on the increase, for a nation with millions of jobless youths, the gross outcome has been a surge in violent crimes by individuals and gangs. Crime committed by Nigerian youths include armed robbery, kidnapping, illicit drug trade, advanced fee fraud (419), murder (Osadolor, 2010); there have also been an increase in Nigerian youths involvement in political violence (Usman, 2010; Mohammed 2009).

Due to the inability of the successive government to meet the expectations of Nigerian youths, the youths are now fighting for emancipation and freedom by floating ethnic militia. The youths are using abrasive words on people in authority, creating violence and civil disobedience (Tenibiaje and Adegoye, 2010). The psyche of the Nigerian youth is bruised. For Nigerian youths to be the true foundation and veritable tool for transformation and national development of the country, there is a need for a counselling intervention.

Counselling is concerned with the feelings, attitude and emotional dispositions of an individual about himself and the situations facing him. The primary aim of a counselling relationship is for the counsellor to help an individual or individuals to have a better understanding of themselves in relation to their present and future problems. During counselling, individuals are reassured, emotions, tensions are released and thinking clarified (Anagbogbu, 2009). Central to all definitions of counseling is Help. This is why counselling has been aptly defined as a helping profession. Counselling could either be with individuals or in groups. Individual counselling is described as a one-to-one relationship between a client who has an issue and a professional who uses various techniques to help solve the problem.

Counselling has been used at different times to change human behaviour, attitudes and beliefs (Anyamene & Izuchi, 2010). The main purpose of this study is to identify the counselling needs of youths in Nigeria in the current political dispensation. This is predicated on the fact that in the world over, there is a massive generational shift to younger people in leadership both in governance and the corporate world. Identifying the counselling needs of Nigerian youths will help in designing counselling packages that could help Nigerian youths become effective, offering professional service to the youth to help them to fully understand their latent potentials, harnessing these potentials and

consequently enabling them make meaningful contribution to the overall development of Nigeria especially in the realization of the transformation agenda which is a major focus of the current political administration.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

There is no gainsaying that the youth is the bedrock of national development of any nation. For any nation to be developed, her youths must be focused, properly guided and be well motivated. Counselling as a helping profession can guarantee a purposeful youth. However, not much attention has been given to the counselling needs of youth in specific political dispensation. This study therefore intends to identify the counselling needs of youths in the current political dispensation.

#### **Research Questions**

- What are the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in this current political dispensation?
- Are there differences in the counselling needs of Nigerian youths on the basis of gender?
- Are there differences in the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in this current political dispensation on the basis of place of abode?

#### **Hypotheses**

To guide this study, two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- 1) There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation on the basis of gender.
- 2) There is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation on the basis of place of abode.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

##### **Research Design**

Descriptive research design was used for this study. It aimed at identifying the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation.

##### **Population**

The population for the study consisted of all Nigerian youths that are between 18 and 35 years old.

##### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample for this study was made up of five hundred youths whose ages range between 18 – 35. The sample consisted of 286 males, and 214 females residing in the urban and rural areas of 8 local governments out of the 20 local government areas and across the 3 senatorial districts of Lagos State. Giving a total of 500 respondents from the population. Their mean age was 25.6.

**Research Instrument**

A self- designed questionnaire Counselling Needs of Nigerian Youths Questionnaire (CNNYQ) was used to obtain data from the participants. The questionnaire was in two parts - sections A and B. Section A sought information on the bio-data of participants. Section B contained 15 items which sought information on the areas Nigerian youths need counselling in the current political dispensation The items were structured on a 5- point modified likert scale. The five point scale in ascending order was from ‘strongly disagree to strongly agree’ . The reliability of the instrument which was determined through the test- retest method after an interval of two weeks indicated a reliability coefficient of 0.84.

**Data Analysis**

The data obtained were analysed using the mean responses to answer the research question and the t-test to test the two hypotheses. Acceptance point for the items was made to be 3.5 and above.

**RESULTS**

Research Question One: What are the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation?

Table 1: Mean responses on the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation

ITEMS		X
Nigerian Youth Need Counselling in the following areas		
1	Corruption	4.22
2	Leadership skill	4.15
3	Good governance	4.28
4	Political violence	4.43
5	Self reliance	4.48
6	Integrity	4.31
7	National interest	4.12
8	Career	4.19
9	Drug use	4.37
10	Hard work	4.18
11	National integration	4.29
12	Mortality	4.07
13	Self management	4.69
14	Plan for future	4.28
15	Creativity	4.08

The result in table 1 reveals that Nigerian youths need counselling in all aspects of the items on the questionnaire as none of the mean responses was below 3.50.

**Test of Hypotheses**

Hypothesis one which states that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation on the basis of gender was tested using the t-test.

Table 2 shows the t -test analysis of the counselling needs of the Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation on the basis of gender (See Apendix).

The result in table 2 shows that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation on the basis of gender. The hypothesis is thereby accepted.

Hypothesis two states that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current dispensation on the basis of place of abode.

Table 3 shows the t -test analysis of the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation on the basis of place of abode (See Apendix).

The result in table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation on the basis of place of abode. The hypothesis is thereby accepted.

**DISCUSSION**

The result in Table 1 revealed the counselling needs of Nigerian Youths in the current political dispensation. The finding is in agreement with Usman (2009), Muhammed (2010) and Badejo& Stephens (2011) who in their various studies identified various problems confronting the Nigerian youths that have been making them live unwholesome life, and the need for intervention such as counselling.

The implication of the finding is that counselling strategies should be designed to address the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation. Counselling according to Anagbogu (2004) has the potential to reassure individuals to release emotional tensions and to clarify thoughts, thereby ensuring such individual live a productive life.

Hypothesis one which states that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation on the basis of gender was accepted. This implies that regardless of the gender of the Nigerian youths their counselling needs do not differ. The explanation for this could be that all youths of this age bracket undergo similar psychological as well as physiological changes which could affect their perception of the counselling needs of the youths. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Tenibiaje & Adegoroye (2010) who reported that there is no difference in the perception of Nigerian

youths about their political leaders on the basis of gender.

Hypothesis two which states that there is no significant difference in the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation on the basis of place of abode was accepted. An explanation for this is that regardless of place of abode, Nigerian youths are confronted with identical problems such as unemployment, lack of basic infrastructure and corruption in the polity which has impacted negatively on the youths.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The study investigated the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Counsellors should be involved in designing and formulating policies that pertain to the youths as they will have a better understanding of the needs of Nigerian youths.
2. Counsellors should make their services available to Nigerian youths both in urban and rural areas.
3. Professional bodies such as the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should organize training and workshops for counsellors to sharpen their counselling techniques on matters that relate to youths and youth development.
4. Counsellors should design counselling packages to address the counselling needs of Nigerian youths.

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Table 2 shows the t -test analysis of the counselling needs of the Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation on the basis of gender.

ITEMS	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Error Mean	T	Sig (2-tailed)
youths need counselling in the area of corruption	male	286	4.328671	0.150454	-0.01735	0.9861678
	female	214	4.331776	0.048551		
youths need counselling in the area of leadership skills	male	286	4.265734	0.04171	1.122361	0.2622497
	female	214	4.196262	0.044867		
youths need counselling as regards good governance	male	286	4.171329	0.048862	-0.07687	0.9387564
	female	214	4.17757	0.06743		
youths need counselling against involvement in political violence	male	286	4.108392	0.057088	0.794169	0.4274751
	female	214	4.037383	0.069741		
youths need counselling to be self reliant	male	286	4.174825	0.086314	-0.19575	0.8448827
	female	214	4.196262	0.052106		
youths need counselling on integrity	male	285	4.185965	0.146246	-0.13913	0.8894046
	female	214	4.219626	0.200077		
youths need counselling for national interest	male	285	4.119298	0.050197	1.544153	0.1231891
	female	213	3.99061	0.069159		
youths need vocational and career counselling	male	286	4.185315	0.054396	-0.01992	0.9841118
	female	214	4.186916	0.057846		
youths need counselling against drug use and drug abuse	male	286	4.34965	0.144631	0.779729	0.4359206
	female	214	4.214953	0.050034		
youths need counselling on the virtue of hard work	male	286	4.185315	0.051618	-0.8841	0.3770715
	female	214	4.341121	0.191758		
youths need counselling for national integration	male	286	4.073427	0.058133	0.350587	0.7260465
	female	214	4.042056	0.068298		
youths need counselling on morality	male	286	4.342657	0.183292	0.903917	0.3664763
	female	214	4.14486	0.062929		
youths need counselling on self management	male	286	4.314685	0.052385	-1.7477	0.0811328
	female	214	4.827103	0.331748		
youths need counselling to be able to plan for the future	male	286	4.146853	0.056024	-3.51331	0.224829
	female	214	4.420561	0.050043		
youths need counselling on the need to be creative	male	286	4.094406	0.057175	0.806205	0.4205096
	female	214	4.023364	0.06737		

df=248 level of sig 0.05 t-critical= 1.96

Table 3 shows the t -test analysis of the counselling needs of Nigerian youths in the current political dispensation on the basis of place of abode

	Place of abode of respondents	N	Mean	Std. Error Mean	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
youths need counselling in the area of corruption	Rural	244	4.221311	0.050972	-1.1852238	0.2364954
	Urban	255	4.431373	0.1663599		
youths need counselling in the area of leadership skills	Rural	244	4.229508	0.0487909	-0.2217599	0.8245919
	Urban	255	4.243137	0.0378774		
youths need counselling as regards good governance	Rural	244	4.147541	0.0621047	-0.7016921	0.4831997
	Urban	255	4.203922	0.0514415		
youths need counselling against involvement in political violence	Rural	244	4.065574	0.0602104	-0.2775024	0.7815097
	Urban	255	4.090196	0.0649135		
youths need counselling to be self reliant	Rural	244	4.102459	0.0557735	-1.5167945	0.1299544
	Urban	255	4.266667	0.0914659		
youths need counselling on integrity	Rural	243	4.185185	0.1700587	-0.1763402	0.8600987
	Urban	255	4.227451	0.1687674		
youths need counselling for national interest	Rural	243	4.004115	0.0598999	-1.4264012	0.154383
	Urban	254	4.122047	0.0570586		
youths need vocational and career counselling	Rural	244	4.172131	0.0558237	-0.3007263	0.763749
	Urban	255	4.196078	0.0566956		
youths need counselling against drug use and drug abuse	Rural	244	4.315574	0.1676605	0.2624262	0.7931016
	Urban	255	4.270588	0.0488132		
youths need counselling on the virtue of hard work	Rural	244	4.131148	0.0603297	-1.3377824	0.1815792
	Urban	255	4.364706	0.1607207		
youths need counselling for national integration	Rural	244	4.094262	0.0615788	0.7531706	0.451704
	Urban	255	4.027451	0.0636989		
youths need counselling on morality	Rural	244	4.27459	0.2141287	0.1448105	0.8849192
	Urban	255	4.243137	0.0562485		
youths need counselling on self management	Rural	244	4.590164	0.2097685	0.3696769	0.7117807
	Urban	255	4.482353	0.202717		
youths need counselling to be able to plan for the future	Rural	244	4.237705	0.0560412	-0.7231202	0.4699462
	Urban	255	4.294118	0.0542954		
youths need counselling on the need to be creative	Rural	244	4.045082	0.0707159	-0.4262631	0.6701007
	Urban	255	4.082353	0.0523156		